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03/13/2022

To Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing **IN SUPPORT** of:

- [S.B. No. 387](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.
- [S.B. No. 392](#) AN ACT CONCERNING STATEMENTS MADE BY JUVENILES.

I am writing **IN STRONG OPPOSITION** to the following bills:

- [S.B. No. 365](#) AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS
- S.B. No. 388: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF A PERSON OR A PERSON'S DWELLING, PLACE OF WORK OR MOTOR VEHICLE.
- [H.B. No. 5418](#) AN ACT REVISING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATUTES AND INSURANCE STATUTES CONCERNING THEFT OF A MOTOR VEHICLE
- [H.B. No. 5417](#) AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SERVICES AND FIREARMS BACKGROUND CHECKS.
- [S.B. No. 386](#) AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY LAWS OF THIS STATE.
- [S.B. No. 16](#) AN ACT ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE AND JUVENILE CRIME

I am opposing these bills because they are deeply shameful and cynical, and will harm children and families in multiple ways. Connecticut already has best practices with regard to reducing the number of children in the juvenile system. What we need to reduce crime is honest efforts to address root causes, not harmful regressive policies.

I would like to especially address the harmful "rising crime" rhetoric motivating these bills. In truth, CT is experiencing some of the lowest crime, in particular car theft in decades. We know this kind is deeply racially motivated and always affects poor and Black and brown children and adults and increase inequality. We've seen this over and over since I was a child in the 80's. You all know it too. Legislation derived from the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (which is why we support SB 387) is open to discussion and voting by members including state legislators, prosecutors, public defenders, state agencies, judges, police, state advocates, victim advocates, community-based organizations, adults and youth. Connecticut has been a model in the country on how to successfully and safely reduce the juvenile justice system and expand diversion and services for youth. **The legislation I oppose today is a departure from these practices.**

Additionally, we know that putting kids in the juvenile crime system does not in fact prevent recidivism, in fact it increases it. Families in Ct need access to trauma informed mental health, housing, food and childcare.

I have had my car stolen more than once in my life. It is expensive and inconvenient. Yet, I am not confused about the value of a human life, particularly a child's life and the value of a car. Our legislators should not be confused either.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Miela Gruber

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Miela Gruber', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.